

Mr. Chris Gay, III - Comments  
3/2/89

Chris Gay IV, his brother Lance, and I visited East Central during the summer of 1987. We spent the morning walking and visiting buildings and dorms on the campus.

Everywhere we had a question, faculty members, coaches and administrators took the time to talk and answer our questions. By the time we met with Coach Jamie Clark that day we were feeling very much at home. Coach Clark not only discussed his baseball program; but covered every topic from academics to food and housing. He then expressed his desire that Chris enroll at East Central and join his baseball team for the coming year.

Needless to say we left East Central with a warm feeling for Jamie Clark and for all the people we met that day.

The next day Chris came to me and said, "Dad, Coach Clark is going to turn the baseball program around at East Central." I think I can help, and I want to be a part of it."

I remember smiling at him and telling him that I thought he had made a very wise decision. Chris' mother and his brother Lance were also very excited about his decision.

That fall in 1987 Chris gave up a football scholarship he had earned earlier at a neighboring school and enrolled at his choice of East Central.

We had not been fooled on our first visit to East Central. The friendliness and support from administration, faculty, and coaches became stronger with each day.

We looked forward to each weekend and having Chris home.

Every weekend was like a new beginning, as we listened to the names of new friends, a lot of those we never met. but the names we do remember, of stories he told of happenings in the classrooms, in the dorm, and on the baseball field, Some stories funny, some sad.

Some things that we will always remember about Chris were:

- His competitive spirit
- His love for people
- His love for his family
- His compassion for his fellowman

We thank God each day for sharing Chris with us for 18 years and 3 months that were filled with memories more beautiful than one can ever imagine.

We will always remember Mr. Joe Clark and the interest he shows for all the students.

We will remember Dean Davis, who always had time to talk and help.

We remember the honor Chris received at Homecoming; being chosen to escort the Homecoming Queen.

It was at the reception following the Homecoming game that we met Dr. Eddie Smith and others associated with East Central.

Even though Chris was at East Central for only a short time, it was a rich time in his life and in the lives of his family.

October 21, 1987 was a very dark and tragic day in our lives. I am grateful for the support shown my family since that time.

Dr. Eddie Smith has been a true friend, and helped in so many ways, so many times.

Words conveyed through Resolutions from the Board of Trustee's have been comforting.

The support from Coach Clark is always present.

The support from the faculty, student body, his many friends, and the members of the baseball team seem to grow stronger with time.

It is a privilege for my family to provide the finishing touches to this fine baseball facility.

I would like to express our appreciation to the Board of Trustee's and administration for naming this field in lasting memory of our son, and brother, John Christopher Gay IV.

Dr. Smith,

I thought you might  
want this for your files  
or for archives.

Ovid

EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
DEDICATION OF THE CHRIS GAY, IV, MEMORIAL FIELD  
MARCH 2, 1989  
7:00 P.M.

COMMENTS: DR. EDDIE M. SMITH, PRESIDENT

- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
- I WANT TO JOIN WITH OUR MASTER OF CEREMONIES, MR. OVID VICKERS, IN WELCOMING YOU ALL TO THIS VERY SPECIAL OCCASION IN THE HISTORY OF EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE.
- TO CHRIS, WANDA, AND LANCE GAY, I EXTEND A HEARTFELT AND SINCERE WELCOME.
- TO ALL OF THE RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF CHRIS WHO ARE HERE, WE WELCOME YOU AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRESENCE.
- BOARD MEMBERS:
- ELECTED OFFICIALS:
- WE HAVE COME TOGETHER THIS EVENING FOR THREE REASONS.
- FIRST, WE ARE HERE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO A FORMER ATHLETE.
- SECOND, WE ARE HERE TO DEDICATE A SPORTS FACILITY; AND THIRD, WE HAVE COME TO SAY "THANK YOU" TO A FAMILY FOR THEIR GENEROSITY IN MAKING THIS BASEBALL FIELD THE MODERN ATHLETIC FACILITY THAT IT IS TODAY.



- CHRIS GAY, IV, THE SON OF MR. AND MRS. JOHN CHRISTOPHER GAY, III, ENTERED EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN AUGUST OF 1987.
- HE HAD INTENDED TO PLAY BASEBALL WITH THE 1987-88 WARRIOR TEAM, BUT IN OCTOBER OF THAT YEAR, AS WE ALL REMEMBER WITH SAD HEARTS, HIS LIFE WAS TAKEN IN A TRAGIC AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT.
- IN THE MONTHS THAT CHRIS WAS A MEMBER OF OUR STUDENT BODY, HE BECAME A FAVORITE AMONG HIS FELLOW STUDENTS.
- HIS OUTGOING PERSONALITY QUICKLY WON FOR HIM MANY FRIENDS ON THE EAST CENTRAL CAMPUS, AND THE FACT THAT HE WAS CHOSEN AS THE QUEEN'S ESCORT AT THE 1987 HOMECOMING TESTIFIES TO HIS POPULARITY AMONG THE STUDENT BODY.
- TWO YOUNG MEN, BARRY McWHIRTER AND STEPHEN McMILLAN, SHARED A ROOM WITH CHRIS IN SCOTT HALL.
- AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, THESE TWO ROOMMATES TOLD ME THAT THEY HAD LOST SOMEONE WHO WAS MORE THAN JUST A FELLOW STUDENT OR ROOMMATE.
- THEY FELT THAT THEY, AND THE ENTIRE CAMPUS, HAD LOST A TRUE FRIEND.
- IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED CHRIS' DEATH, HIS FATHER AND I TALKED MANY TIMES.
- MR. GAY TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN MEMORY OF HIS SON.
- THIS MONETARY CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE USED TO IMPROVE THE BASEBALL FACILITIES ON THE CAMPUS AND WOULD AT THE SAME TIME BECOME A MEMORIAL TO CHRIS.

- IN THE NAME OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE, I ACCEPTED THIS GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION IN THE SAME SPIRIT IN WHICH IT WAS OFFERED.
- THE GENEROSITY OF MR. GAY, MRS. GAY, AND THEIR SON, LANCE, HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE COLLEGE TO INSTALL LIGHTING FOR THIS FIELD AND TO CONSTRUCT THE PRESS BOX AND CONCESSION STAND.
- THE COLLEGE HAS PROVIDED THE NEW BLEACHERS AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS ON THE FIELD.
- THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE MADE BY THE GAY FAMILY HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE COLLEGE, FOR THE FIRST TIME, TO PLAY BASEBALL UNDER THE LIGHTS.
- NO LONGER WILL IT BE NECESSARY FOR STUDENTS TO MISS CLASSES TO PARTICIPATE IN BASEBALL BECAUSE OF AN UNLIGHTED FIELD.
- AS MR. AND MRS. GAY AND I TALKED ABOUT THE LIGHTS FOR THE FIELD, BOTH EXPRESSED THEIR HOPE THAT HAVING A LIGHTED BASEBALL FIELD AT THE COLLEGE WOULD MAKE YET ANOTHER EVENING ACTIVITY AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS ON CAMPUS AND THAT OTHER LIVES MIGHT BE SPARED AS STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN AND ATTENDED NIGHT BASEBALL GAMES RATHER THAN TRAVELING THE HIGHWAYS IN AUTOMOBILES.
- THROUGH THE GENEROSITY OF MR. AND MRS. JOHN C. GAY, III, AND THEIR SON, LANCE, AND BECAUSE OF THEIR DESIRE TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF THEIR SON, AND BROTHER CHRIS GAY, IV, TODAY EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS DEDICATING THIS FIELD TO THE PERPETUAL MEMORY OF CHRIS GAY, IV.

- THE COLLEGE IS PROUD OF THE YOUNG MAN WHOSE MEMORY IS BEING HONORED HERE, AND WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT HIS MEMORY WILL LIVE ON IN THE SPIRIT OF ALL THOSE YOUNG MEN WHO WILL STEP TO THE BATTER'S PLATE, WAIT FOR THE PITCH, AND HEAR THE ROAR OF THE CROWD AS A BASEBALL SOARS IN THE DISTANT OUTFIELD.
- A BETTER GAME OF BASEBALL WILL BE PLAYED AT EAST CENTRAL BECAUSE A YOUNG MAN NAMED CHRIS GAY CAME OUR WAY.
- AND NOW I WOULD LIKE TO READ THE INSCRIPTION ON THIS MARKER WHICH MAKES THIS DEDICATION AN OFFICIAL ACT OF THE EAST CENTRAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

CHRIS GAY, IV MEMORIAL FIELD  
 COMPLETED BY THE PARENTS AND BROTHER OF JOHN CHRISTOPHER  
 GAY, IV, IN 1988, AS A MEMORIAL TO CHRIS, WHO LOST HIS  
 LIFE IN AN AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT OCTOBER 21, 1987, WHILE A  
 STUDENT ATHLETE AT EAST CENTRAL JUNIOR COLLEGE.

- IT IS MY HONOR AND PRIVILEGE TO OFFICIALLY AND PERMANENTLY DECLARE THIS FIELD THE CHRIS GAY, IV, MEMORIAL BASEBALL FIELD.
- THANK YOU VERY MUCH.



*Dedication*

*of the*

CHRIS GAY, IV

MEMORIAL BASEBALL FIELD

*7:00 P. M.*

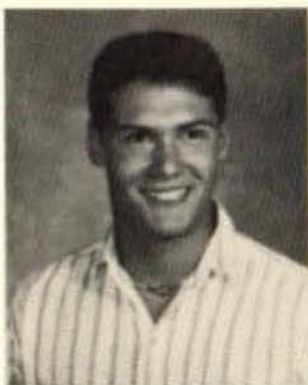
*Thursday, March 2, 1989*

*East Central Community College*

*DECATUR, MISSISSIPPI*







*JOHN CHRISTOPHER GAY, IV*  
*July 24, 1969 - October 21, 1987*

The East Central Community College Baseball Field is being named in honor of Chris Gay, IV, who was a student-athlete at the college when he lost his life in a tragic automobile accident on October 21, 1987.

Chris, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Christopher Gay, III, of Meridian, was a very popular student and outstanding young athlete. He served as escort for Homecoming Queen Shelley Wolverton of Philadelphia and was a promising third baseman on Coach Jamie Clark's Warrior Baseball Team.

Thanks to a generous donation by his parents along with financial support from East Central Community College, the memory of Chris Gay will last forever, as a memorial sign has been erected designating the baseball facility as the Chris Gay, IV, Memorial Field.

Many improvements have been made on the field, including installation of lights and aluminum seating, and construction of a pressbox-concession stand.

## *PROGRAM*

Welcome  
 Master of Ceremonies

Mr. Ovid Vickers  
 Chairperson, Division of  
 Humanities and Fine Arts

Invocation

Keith McGee  
 Member of Warrior  
 Baseball Team

Color Guard

Mississippi National  
 Guard

National Anthem

East Central Community  
 College Brass Ensemble  
 Mr. Tom Carson, Director

Comments on Behalf of  
 the College

Dr. Eddie M. Smith  
 President

Response on Behalf of  
 Family

Mr. John C. Gay, III

Presentation of Flowers  
 to Mrs. John C. Gay, III

Mr. Jamie Clark  
 Baseball Coach

Refreshments

Warrior Corps  
 Concession Area